

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-07 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ORM-01 DHA-02

/060 W

----- 102929

R 241710Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3122

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 15697

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, XL, CA

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR IO DATA: NGUYEN PHUONG THIEP

REFS: A. OTTAWA 3522; B. STATE 111652; C. BONN 7227;
D. BONN 7156; E. BONN 6785; F. STATE 87843; G. BONN
5996

1. AMBASSADOR THIEP ASSUMED CHARGE OF THE RVN EMBASSY
IN BONN JUNE 11, 1974. HE REMAINED IN THIS POST UNTIL
LAST MAY 2, WHEN HE INFORMED THE FRG AUTHORITIES THAT
THE EMBASSY WAS CLOSING DOWN ITS OPERATION.

2. U.S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS MAINTAINED ONLY LIMITED
ASSOCIATION WITH THIEP UNTIL THE FINAL WEEKS OF HIS
STAY IN BONN. BEGINNING IN APRIL, THE CONFUSING
SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY LED THIEP TO ESTABLISH MORE
FREQUENT CONTACT WITH US. REF. G REPORTED AN APRIL 14
APPROACH BY THIEP TO AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND, IN WHICH
HE REQUESTED EVACUATION ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS
LIVING IN SAIGON, IN THE EVENT SOUTH VIETNAMESE
AUTHORITIES WERE UNABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR RESISTANCE TO
THE COMMUNISTS. THIEP DESCRIBED HOW HE AND HIS FAMILY
HAD BEEN FIGHTING THE COMMUNISTS EVER SINCE 1949,
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PARTICULARLY IN HIS ROLES AS JOURNALIST, PARLIAMENTAR-

IAN, DIPLOMAT, AND MEMBER OF THE RVN DELEGATION TO THE PARIS PEACE TALKS. HE HANDED OVER A LIST OF FAMILY MEMBERS IN SAIGON WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED TO WASHINGTON.

3. EMBOFF SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED AMBASSADOR THIEP THAT THE LIST PROVIDED WAS BEING FORWARDED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO EMBASSY SAIGON FOR ITS RECORDS (REF. F).

4. AS THE SAIGON SITUATION DETERIORATED, HE INFORMED THE EMBASSY THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE RVN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD ALSO APPROACHED AMEMBASSY SAIGON IN SUPPORT OF EFFORT TO HAVE MEMBERS OF THIEP'S FAMILY EVACUATED. BY THEN SEVERAL MEMBERS HAD ALREADY MADE IT TO GUAM (REF. E). AT THE SAME TIME HE VOLUNTEERED THAT A PROFESSOR THIEN, FRIEND AND FORMER SPOKESMAN OF THEN NEW RVN PRESIDENT "BIG" MINH, WOULD BE VISITING HIM WITHIN A FEW DAYS AND THAT HE WOULD CONVEY ANY INFORMATION THAT MIGHT DEVELOP. THE SAIGON COLLAPSE INTERVENED.

5. ON MAY 2 THIEP CALLED (REF. D) TO INFORM US THAT HE WAS OUT OF CONTACT WITH SAIGON. THIEP SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO TURN OVER TO FRG AUTHORITIES FOR SAFEKEEPING THE EMBASSY'S PLANT AND EQUIPMENT ALONG WITH ITS REMAINING FUNDS (CA \$50,000). THIEP STATED HE WAS UNDER PRESSURE FROM HIS STAFF TO DIVIDE UP THESE FUNDS. HE HOPED, HE SAID, THAT THIS PRESSURE WOULD NOT ASSUME PHYSICAL FORM. (TWO DAYS EARLIER SEVERAL VIETNAMESE STUDENTS HAD OCCUPIED THE RVN CHANCELLERY FOR A SHORT TIME, CLAIMING THAT THEY WANTED TO PREVENT THE AMBASSADOR FROM FLEEING AND TO SECURE FILES AND OTHER

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-07 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03

PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ORM-01 DHA-02

/060 W

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R 241710Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3123
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 15697

ITEMS OF VALUE. AFTER POLICE PERSUADED THEM TO LEAVE, THE STUDENTS REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED THEIR ACTION BY CHARGING THAT THE RVN GOVERNMENT HAD FLED, RATHER THAN PARTICIPATING IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A COUNTRY DEVASTATED BY THIRTY-YEARS OF WAR, AND THAT AMBASSADOR THIEP WOULD DO THE SAME).

6. AFTER CLOSING THE EMBASSY THIEP REQUESTED OUR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING ASYLUM IN THE U.S. FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY (REF. C). WHILE HIS WIFE AND THREE YOUNGER CHILDREN (STUDYING IN PARIS) WERE WITH HIM IN EUROPE, THE OLDEST SON, NGUYEN PHUONG LAM, WAS ALREADY IN THE U.S. AS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN BUSINESS AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY. THE DEPARTMENT REPLY (REF. B) TO THIS REQUEST WAS TO ADVISE THIEP TO SEEK ANOTHER COUNTRY OF ASYLUM OR ASSISTANCE THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY. THE EMBASSY LAST HEARD FROM AMBASSADOR THIEP MAY 20 WHEN HE WROTE FROM HIS PERSONALLY-OWNED APARTMENT AT 62, RUE BRANCION, PARIS XVEME (TEL. 531.76.75) THAT HE AND HIS WIFE HAD ARRIVED THERE TO BE TEMPORARILY WITH THE THREE YOUNGER CHILDREN, AND THAT HE STILL HOPED TO GET TO THE U.S. THIEP EXPRESSED
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GRATITUDE TO THE AMBASSADOR FOR ASSISTANCE SHOWN HIM DURING HIS FINAL DIFFICULT DAYS IN BONN.

COMMENT: THE EMBASSY CANNOT CONFIRM ANY ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING AMBASSADOR THIEP. REF. D. SUGGESTS HE MAY IN FACT HAVE PREVENTED MISAPPROPRIATION OF RVN FUNDS. ON ONE OCCASION HE INFORMED EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER THAT HE HAD SUFFICIENT PRIVATE MEANS TO SURVIVE OUTSIDE SOUTH VIET NAM FOR THE TIME BEING. DURING HIS FINAL WEEKS AT POST THIEP IMPRESSED AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND AND THOSE EMBOFFS WITH WHOM HE CAME IN CONTACT AS BEING SINCERELY TROUBLED BOTH BY FAMILY CONCERNS AND BY THE PROBLEMS OF HIS NATIVE LAND. IN HIS SOFT-SPOKEN ENGLISH HE AT ALL TIMES REFLECTED A POISED MANNER AND PLEASANT PERSONALITY.

HILLENBRAND

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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